UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

FACULTY SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Friday, 8 March 2024

8:30 am

Present: Paik, Hoagland, Brewer, Berlin, Katz, Olsen, Messier, Trim

1. Minutes

   Neal Katz is responsible for the minutes of this meeting.

   Approved minutes of the 10 February 2024 meeting submitted by David Hoagland.

2. Commonwealth Honors College thesis seminars (Guest: Dominick Usher, Senior Assistant Dean of CHC)

499T: 4 credit courses will be reviewed by the faculty senate. Reviewed by the academic matters council unless experimental, in which case it is reviewed by the faculty senate secretary.

Courses with more than 4 credits are an issue. 6 credit courses meet 5 hours a week. Currently 2 in CHC and one in Isenberg. Could split into a 499T and an ordinary independent study. Could move the one in Isenberg to CHC.

Is a course with many students really a thesis?

One such course oversees several students. Meets with each one 30 minutes a week. But over two semesters.

Rationale for 6 credit course is graduating sooner, Maybe caused by lack of planning by students. Not invented to solve that problem though. Even so do we want to allow such courses to exist. Can a student really do a whole thesis in one semester? We are dubious that it is possible.

There are many 4 credit 499T courses that exist now. Do we want to review them or leave them as they are? Feeling is that we should leave them as they are now.

This seems to be all about graduating early not about good academics. There are also equity issues. Should return it to academic matters council.

Stick with our voted statement: "The Rules Committee will require the Academic Matters Council to review and approve additional credits for thesis seminars (499 courses), with a maximum of 4 credits allowed."

Maybe we should move back to getting an honors degree option without a thesis.

3. Need to find a new presiding officer now that the current one is retiring. Some names were suggested. Will announce we a soliciting nominations and vote at the May meeting.

4. Agenda items for the 4 April 2024 Faculty Senate meeting

a. Presentations

i. CCPH services and support for students

ii. Add a presentation about MAC conference shift implications.

iii. Additional presentations

1. Flex 2.0 (have them talk to rules alone first, then maybe whole faculty senate in May).

2. Strategic planning (delay until at least May).

3. Should we bring up the calendar at the next rules-admin meeting.

5. Discussion items

a. Additional Bylaws revisions – Secretary search process 2027

Secretary received some updates. Should we add additional faculty? Making administrators ex officio removes them from the number count so practically more faculty will be added.

Provide for more a gradual transition between major senate officers, like the secretary.

Need more time to identify candidates. Perhaps start the process in December. Put off bylaw change on this issue until a later time.

The rules commitee discu retired faculty serve on committees and councils?

b. Medical excuses

   Talk about this at rules-admin. Sent to student life council.

   Other peer universities have a central attendance office.

The rest of the following topics postponed to next meeting.

c. Ombuds office and search processes

d. CIP procedures

e. Strategic planning and faculty representation

f. Reviewing the General education system: next steps

g. Flex 2.0

h. Disability services

i. Organizational and administrative status of Interdisciplinary Studies

j. Possible agenda items for Rules-Admin (Segal, childcare support, add/drop policies, equity action plans, assessment, tuition waivers, and budget/strategic investments)